Chapter 19

Military History and Army Records

Vincent H. Demma

THE writing of military history depends upon the preservation of the record of military activities. Preserved in various archives, libraries, and other depositories, that record enables historians today to reconstruct the military history of bygone centuries. Through accident, neglect, or even design on the part of those entrusted with it, part of the record of the past has been lost forever. In our own time, no less than in centuries past, preservation is a very real problem. At one time or another in his career, every officer is likely to face it. Simply stated, it is one of preserving the current record that will be of greatest use and value in the future without flooding repositories with an unmanageable volume of paper.

Army Records Management

In many respects the writing of contemporary military history depends on the good judgment of numerous civilian and military action officers, secretaries, clerks, records managers, and administrators. An extremely small portion of the approximately one million linear feet of records created annually by the Army survives as part of the permanent historical record. Most records are destroyed by agency or command records managers and others shortly after they are created and their temporary value has ended. Those remaining are retired to federal records centers. Screened in accordance with predetermined retention and destruction schedules, some of these are destroyed periodically. Very few finally reach the National Archives, and from these the history of the Army in our own time must be written.

Good records management helps create future archives, and adequate documentation makes possible the preparation of good history. Effective management during the entire life-span of

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Army records is a prerequisite for the preservation of future military archives and the preparation of future histories. Throughout the Army, from the small unit to the departmental level, records clerks, action officers, records managers, and official historians, serve as custodians of the Army's actions and thoughts, keepers of the institutional memory. Only through the guidance and work of records managers, with the cooperation of civilian and military personnel alike, will Army records of historical value eventually enter the archives to become available to future historians.

Good records management is the product of experience and professional training. Although military officers and records managers are introduced to the historical importance of Army records in their respective schools and training programs, this introduction is fleeting. Many officers and civilians, including records managers, never acquire a keen historical sense. Determining which documents should be saved and which can be destroyed requires an appreciation of the place of history within the Army. Professional training, orientation, and experience should imbue historians with this appreciation. Army officers, usually lacking the historian's special training, still need to recognize the historical value and potential scholarly uses of the documents that pass through their hands.

Recognition of the historical significance of the many documents created during World War II helped spur the creation of a formal records management program. The Army had to arrange and dispose of a mass of unorganized and unevaluated documents, so that those of historical significance would be retained for future reference. Army historians, in particular, were interested in records necessary for official histories of World War II and pressed for a systematic program of collection and preservation. The result of this general concern was the establishment in 1943 of the War Department Records Branch of the Adjutant General's Office. Redesignated the Departmental Records Branch (DRB) in 1947, it became a custodial facility for the Army's World War II records. Until these documents were transferred to the National Archives as permanent records, they were maintained at the branch where they were screened and arranged in proper order. In compiling inventories, indexes, and other finding aids, the records managers in the branch became thoroughly familiar with the documents. Their knowledge was invaluable to the historians who prepared the volumes in the U.S. Army in World War II series.

Although successful in organizing and preserving a volumi-

nous quantity of Army documents, records managers realized that many of their difficulties stemmed from fundamental weaknesses in the Army's system of creating and maintaining records. Records keeping in the Army had undergone little change since the introduction in 1914 of the War Department decimal filing system and its scheme of subject files. Using this system, Army file clerks often exercised considerable latitude in selecting documents to retain and files in which to place them. As the staff of the DRB discovered, the separate Army bureaus and various agencies, offices, and divisions of the Army staff rarely followed common standards of records management. The branch staff had to review thousands of documents item-by-item to separate unimportant from important ones. At the same time, latitude enjoyed by Army clerks allowed considerable duplication. Historians happily discovered that files maintained in certain agencies were more comprehensive than similar files in the custody of the DRB.

Hoping to prevent the recurrence of these difficulties, records managers began planning a new, Army-wide system soon after the end of World War II. To avoid reviewing documents and files in an intermediate records repository like the DRB required a system for predetermining the value of every Army file, one segregating temporary from permanent records at the time files were created. Permanent records would then go directly from the agency creating them to a records repository, and the entire records retirement program would become decentralized and streamlined.

After reviewing over two thousand different subject files then being used in the Army and considering the legal, administrative, fiscal, and historical value of the documents involved, records managers devised standards to determine the disposition of each file. Instead of incorporating these features into the existing system, however, records managers decided to create an entirely new system. In this new filing system, files defined by the function or mission they served in the unit or agency creating and maintaining them replaced subject files. A new records management program, the Army Functional Filing System (TAFFS), incorporating decentralized records keeping and retirement, was introduced throughout the Army between 1959 and the end of 1962.

The functional system has not completely lived up to expectations. Surveys of Army records as recently as 1975 show that some Army staff agencies still fail to use the system properly. Lengthy and sometimes confusing regulations some-

times cause difficulties, and subject filing and the use of the War Department decimal filing system continue. Historians and action officers, in particular, find subject files more convenient. A general lack of confidence in the system contributes to acquisition and retention of documents for reference and working files, a practice that causes duplication and delays the retirement of important records. And without familiarity gained by working with the documents, records managers frequently do not appreciate the historical value of many documents and files routinely shredded or burned. Particularly susceptible to destruction are informal files of working papers, background files, and personal working files that rarely enter the records retirement system. Decentralized records keeping, which in essence makes every action officer in the Army his or her own records clerk, continues to encourage highly individual approaches to the job without assuring that important records will be retained for historical reference.

Vietnam Records

Army historians recognized that problems continued even after adoption of functional filing, but intensified combat operations in South Vietnam beginning in 1965 caused real alarm. Anticipating once again the need for adequate documentation to prepare official histories, historians discovered that the Army records management program was falling short of its promise and potential.

Even during peacetime the Army's records program suffered from a shortage of experienced and trained managers. And records personnel assigned to units in combat sometimes lacked even basic training in records management. Uncertain about the functional system, entertaining only vague ideas about what constituted historical records, and with short tours limiting experience, records clerks and administrators in Vietnam often found their task complicated, unrewarding, and occasionally overwhelming. Moreover, because of the viscissitudes of combat or the lack of guidance, many records were never created while others were prematurely destroyed. Unit records tended to suffer most as professionally trained records managers generally were assigned only to major command headquarters. It was difficult for them to visit remote, highly mobile units engaged in combat; such units usually did without professional guidance on records keeping.

Historians were especially concerned about basic sources of

combat history: the daily journal and the supporting documents constituting the journal file, as well as other planning, intelligence, and operational records. These records provide the gist for future histories; units that leave behind poor records or none at all receive little notice by historians. More importantly, such documents help evaluate and modify the Army's doctrine, tactics, and training.

Military historians serving with units in Vietnam and working with records managers made special efforts to see that combat records and other significant documents were prepared and entered the Army's records retirement system. Instructions to Army field historians from higher headquarters gave first priority to "developing and maintaining general awareness of the necessity for creation and preservation of accurate comprehensive records."[1] By monitoring the records program within the units he served, the field historian helped assure that sources required by historians were being created and retired; he often salvaged documents that might otherwise have been destroyed or lost. Provisions were made to acquire records of activities such as the pacification and advisory programs for which the functional filing system provided inadequate guidance.

That such extraordinary efforts were required by field historians contributed to The Adjutant General in 1968 suspending authority to destroy any records created by Army units in South Vietnam. Starting in that year, all records from the combat zone were retired as permanent regardless of previous functional filing designation. To facilitate use by Army historians, records were returned to the United States quickly. Many records from Vietnam, however, remain to be screened, evaluated, reorganized, and disposed of by Army records managers, a situation somewhat similar to that after World War II.

Headquarters Files

Combat naturally makes difficult the creation and preservation of records. yet even at larger, more stable headquarters to the rear of the combat zone, including Department of Army headquarters itself, records are susceptible to unnecessary destruction. Pressures of economy, space, and time continually jeopardize historically valuable staff documents. The tempta-

1. Hqs., U.S. Army Vietnam, USARV Reg 870-1, 28 Dec 1966. See Chapter 13 for additional discussion of military historians in the field.

tion to destroy records is very real at every level. In their zeal to win the "battle of the bulk," records managers and staff officers easily lose sight of the historical value of records, and destruction is easier than preservation with its time-consuming administrative tasks.

At all large headquarters, whether during peace or war, a chronic problem is the creation and unwarranted destruction of uncontrolled personal working papers or action officer files. Records managers have been slow to recognize that these files often contain documents of historical significance. Such documents, drawn from a variety of sources and usually related to a single subject, action, or case, help historians understand the how and why of major actions, decisions, and policies. They often make the difference between good and bad history and, in some respects, are as crucial as the basic sources for combat histories. Officers sometimes consider working papers personal property and destroy them upon reassignment, retirement, or completion of a particular action. Sometimes they are passed to a successor, but the files rarely are brought to the attention of the records manager or historian.

There probably is no simple solution to the problem of preserving action officer files. The functional filing system itself is ambivalent regarding their official status, and records managers have yet to devise a system to keep them intact. Conscientious application of the functional system contributes in part to the destruction of these files when agency records managers remove historically significant documents from the files because they are not considered records material or because they originate from another agency or office. Army historians occasionally resort to a variety of informal practices to compensate for this neglect. They often personally gain access to or acquire certain files pertaining to their current work. After crises, when historians have worked closely with action officers, working files and background papers have been entrusted by officers to staff historians for safekeeping and future reference. That the historian alone seeks out and preserves these valuable documents and files is symptomatic of a serious weakness in the functional filing system. Historians fully recognize that it is impossible and improper for them to act as records managers of working papers and action officer files, but occasionally the higher claims of history must take precedence over a system that inadvertently neglects important sources. Historians would prefer records management regulations that assure the retirement of these files.

Even if it were proper for historians to play an active role in obtaining action officer files, they cannot be expert in all the subjects addressed by a large staff. Volume alone makes difficult the identification of historically significant working papers. Judgments in many instances are often based upon intuition rather than expertise. Neither the historian nor the staff officer is immune from occasional professional astigmatism that inhibits his appreciation of less familiar subjects. In many cases the action officer is the expert who can guide historians and records managers, advising them of the existence of significant files and urging their retention. Being aware that files may have historical significance is the first step toward their preservation.

Selecting and Preserving Historical Sources

Without the professional acumen and guidance of an historian, archivist, or records manager, determining what documents to preserve is risky. In a field as catholic as military history, selection of sources may well reflect a variety of biases. For some historians and officers, operational records of battles and campaigns suffice; others with a larger view of military history want additional records. Yet difficult as it is to specify the nature of the records from which the history of the Army will be written, some general guidance can be tendered to the officer who has to wrestle with this problem. Whether in a field unit or a large headquarters staff, primary consideration should be given to preserving records required by the functional filing system. If applied with diligence and intelligence, the system generally will cover the most basic and important Army records. A leading archivist set forth a "basic rule" that "if records constitute the data upon which important decisions were made or illustrate the . . . decision making process, they are likely to be of historical importance."[2] This rule or reliance on the functional system alone can be restrictive, and any selection at all risks neglecting the narrow interest of a specialist. Nevertheless, records pertaining to the organization, mission, functions, operations, plans, and policies of a unit or agency will include those historical records serving the widest possible interests.

Familiarity with the functional filing system together with professional historical advice will identify many important historical records, but finding the more elusive Army documents requires thorough knowledge of an organization and its

2. Meyer H. Fishbein, "The Archivist Meets the Records Creator," *American Archivist* 28 (1965):195-97.

workings. Through contacts with key persons, historians often locate and acquire significant documents. Similarly, in the course of staff work an officer will become familiar with how decisions are made, who makes them, and where plans and studies are prepared. Action officer files contain pertinent documents, but individuals often possess diaries, memoranda of conversations, personal messages, and similar confidential communications. These can be extremely important historical sources. People who have documents like these sometimes are surprised to learn of their historical value. Once aware of the value, they may become reluctant to part with the documents because of their personal nature. Others part with them but insist that their use be restricted in one way or another, while some, fearing the disclosure of sensitive, critical, or embarrassing information, may seek to censor or suppress the documents. Suppression of information embarrassing to the Army is generally a disservice to the Army and to the cause of history, and historians discourage it. On the other hand, unless special provisions are made for the preservation of sensitive personal papers, they may be irretrievable. The Army has a special repository, the Military History Research Institute at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, for just such a purpose. At the institute even the most highly sensitive personal papers can be preserved until their use is approved by the donor. (See Chapter 12.)

Attention to the details of creating, maintaining, and retiring records not only helps assure their preservation but facilitates their use. Although lost in the anonymity of large bureaucracies, the Army's records clerks, file clerks, secretaries, and others play a vital role in preserving historical records. Historians and staff officers may find that these people know the records quite well. In the search for historical sources, their contributions can be as important as those of many decision makers and action officers.

Automatic Data Processing

With the introduction of computers, miniaturization, and sophisticated means of communication, records keeping and records management in the Army is becoming more complicated than the mere filing and retirement of pieces of paper. These rapidly expanding and highly technical fields are impinging on almost every aspect of modern records keeping. Although paper records are not about to be replaced entirely, they are but one

medium for the transmission of information. And information conveyed by the records, rather than the nature of the records, is the historian's prime concern. Neither the records manager nor the historian has displayed an overwhelming concern about the historical value of new forms of documentation. The ramifications of these less traditional records for future historical research is still uncertain. Records managers and archivists are beginning to come to grips with some of the difficulties in identifying, evaluating, storing, retrieving, and preserving new forms of documentation. Military historians, likewise, are realizing that these records offer new opportunities for research and are seeking their preservation. Like many paper records, computer records and micro records are perishable, and much work remains to be done by historians, records managers, and archivists to make certain that they are available for future research.

Some of the Army's contemporary history will be difficult to write without computer records and computer analysis of historical data. Even combat history may require these records and techniques as the use of computers in tactical operations alters the nature and substance of operational records. Most reporting systems within the Army today depend at one stage or another upon computer operations, and historians using such reports are concerned about the possible loss of the raw data and the supporting documentation. Nearly every officer has already been or will be exposed to this new computer environment. A few will become experts, but even fewer will combine their expertise with an interest in military history. Until historians and records managers acquire the technical and specialized skills of computer experts, they will have to rely on advice and assistance from those individuals who can bridge the gap between computers and history. As with paper records, the first step toward preserving information for research and reference is recognition by those handling such information that it possesses intrinsic historical value.

Not many in the Army can make its historical programs and the historical aspects of records management a primary concern. Not even historians or records managers can devote their full attention to preserving historical records. But all Army officers can help make records management an effective adjunct to the Army's historical programs. This help may entail no more than

becoming familiar with appropriate regulations and assuring that records are prepared, maintained, and retired. A more active role may be required when, for example, action officer files, personal papers, or records that escape the normal channels of retirement are involved. Motives for preserving historical documents vary from individual to individual. Pride in a unit's accomplishments or a desire to see that lessons are derived from a particular action are worthy motives, but most historical records do not have immediate value. As a sense of history and an appreciation of the role history plays in the Army grows, a feeling may also grow that a record of events is worth preserving for its own sake.

Few pat answers exist for the many problems in records management and its relation to military history. Other than current Army regulations, no manual tells officers or records managers how to recognize historical records. While the functional filing system is a starting point, and the historian's insight and intuition help in locating and evaluating documents, every officer should make certain that significant records in his or her custody are preserved. Command interest in and emphasis on records management and historical activities are important and necessary. Yet the success of the Army's historical programs depends on the cooperation of many people in saving today's records for generations of historians to come. This cooperation and the preservation of the Army's historical records serves not only one's unit, command, or agency, but also in the years to come the historical profession, the Army, and ultimately the American people.

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Especially useful articles about records management are those of Everett O. Alldredge (1971), Ollon D. McCool, Maynard Brichford, Frank B. Evans, and Meyer H. Fishbein. Literature about the Army's records management program is limited. See Seymour J. Promrenze, Mable Deutrich, and Sherrod East. Army

regulations pertaining to functional filing are also listed below.

The impact of computer technology and other advances in information technology on records management is generating a tremendous amount of discussion, much of it highly technical. The following authors give a general introduction: Everett Alldredge (1965), Ben Cramer, Rodd S. Exelbert, Harry N. Fujita, Chester L. Guthrie, Morris Rieger, and Gerald J. Rosenkrantz.

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Chapter 20

Writing for Official and Unofficial Publication

Joseph R. Friedman

A distinguished astronaut came back from the moon and wrote a fine and lively volume about his experience on the ground and in space. His book could have been an overly technical hodgepodge of abstruse language, a dull history full of the nuts and bolts that made up his vehicle. The significant factor, for the person who wants to be published, can be found in the front matter of Michael Collins's book, one page after the dedication to his wife. On that page he thanks first his prep school English teacher, who taught him to write a sentence, then his editor, and then his typist. Now that is listing priorities right.

A number of years ago a historical manuscript full of interminable qualifying clauses, endless compartments of fuller amplification, and passive verbs that protected the doer of an unfortunate deed from exposure came to my desk. I asked the author, a gifted raconteur and a personable fellow, what he was trying to say. He told me, I took notes, gave them to him; he juggled them somewhat and produced something intelligible. His prose had become "muscular," as Samuel Eliot Morison counseled. Why, I asked him, didn't you do that in the first place? You catch your audience's interest immediately when you talk. You made your points clearly and strongly when you translated your prose for me. Why don't you write the way you talk?

His answer was simple. When I write, he said, I feel the hot breath of my fellow historians on my neck. When I talk, I feel freer to slide over the dull patches. This man had all the proper academic credentials, he had lived dangerously through World War II, he was by no means a dull pedant; but he feared the academic stilettos—and there are none sharper—of his fellow scholars.

You who read these words have been to the requisite military schools. You have had the courses in History and English

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considered necessary to attain your present state of grace. You may have had battlefield experience. Perhaps you wear a gold or silver bar. You might even sport twin bars or a gold oak leaf on your shoulder. Many of you have stars in your eyes. Having been exposed to appropriate education and training in how to study, and profit from, written military history, you have read the wise words purveyed in the preceding chapters of this book. Now you are presumably ready to advance your career to the point of producing fruits of your own that will nourish your colleagues and specialists in the broad acres of the field of military history.

How do you start producing? You start by using your own experience, your training, and your reading to give birth to ideas. As soon as the ideas mature enough, you start writing. Like truth and beauty, research can be its own excuse for being. But beauty, too blatant or contrived, is a drug on the market. Truth, told in unrestrained detail, can become tiresome. The most effective form of research consists of plucking the important verities of a situation from a confusing mass of items. This is the beginning of writing.

For purposes of this guide, research must be considered as a means to an end, and one of these ends is writing. There are those who find the act of writing so difficult and the fussy detail in research so fascinating that they put off the end and concentrate interminably on the means. This approach does not make for a high rate of production. The obvious answer, of course, is to get on with the writing as soon as possible. To do so will facilitate research as well as writing because the prose put down will undoubtedly expose holes. To fill in the holes more research is necessary, but this kind of research will be better directed and more meaningful as the inevitable gaps that must be filled become more readily apparent.

It is perhaps tarnishing the gilt on the lily to repeat what has been attributed to the late *New Yorker* editor, Harold Ross, that easy writing makes damn hard reading. The first thing to do to ease the burden of the reader is to establish a pattern. Is your material to be told chronologically? Is it to be told topically? Is it to emerge as a combination of the two, which is generally the case in anything more complex than a child's nursery rhyme?

Unless the end result is to amount to a gloworm without the glow, it must be given some sort of bone structure. The bone structure sets the pattern, and the pattern must be discernible under the fleshing or words, not too fat, not too lean, akin in many respects to the features of an attractive human being.

When the word *writing* comes up, it is inevitable that *style*

shoves its head in and must be dealt with. It is well known that most words in the English language have more than one definition—take the multiple meaning of the little word get for a sample. Style, in its most important definition, is impossible to teach. For it is the result of lifelong habits. It would be as rewarding to teach such a subject, and as fruitless, as to teach personality to an oaf or to stimulate a recognition of pitch in the ear of someone who is tone deaf. These components of the human character are built up from the time the baby rewards his mother and his deliverer by making his first outcry against the injustices of the world he is thrust into. His personality, his ear, his style are from that moment on the product of his genes, his conversations with his parents or whoever happens to have the job of rearing him, and his reading, his writing, and his ways of coping with or circumventing the traps that lie in wait for all creatures on earth. To teach style in this meaning would be as misleading and meretricious as to claim that ear training is a useful service in overcoming an inherent inability to distinguish sharp from flat. The claim is false. If one needs this kind of training, he might well consider a different outlet for his energies.

Too many tyros in the business of writing believe that a one-shot course in how to write is the answer to questionable evils. This is the approach of an overoptimistic dilettante who would survive neither a battlefield nor a skirmish with a publisher. It encourages people who should never have unslung their pencils from their hosters to use their weapons indiscriminately, indefinitely, ambiguously, and, more to the point, inaccurately.

Another kind of style, however, is teachable. It consists of what might be called the mechanics of writing. A good editor can be of immense service. But it would be helpful to him and to you to get a few things squared away before you embark on your literary endeavors. Not until you begin to write do you come up against the gadfly dilemmas of whether a number should be written out or not, an organization should begin with a capital letter or not, a last name should appear first in a footnote or not, a page of manuscript should be double-spaced or not, a simple comma should be inserted or not. These little problems are only the beginning. When, for example, does one use a plural verb with a collective noun? Most of the time in England, but only sometimes in the United States. When is the antecedent of a noun of doubtful parentage? When do you use the third edition of Merriam-Webster or the second edition? These are all fleabite questions, but readers scratch what they consider to be the

wrong answer raw. The world is full of a number of things, but to the writer it sometimes seems to be populated by nitpickers. It should be remembered that nits are young lice, and manuscripts afflicted with them can justifiably be called lousy.

It would give the writer and his critics comfort to include here a style manual. But to do so could lull the reader of this guide into a false sense of security. Different publishers have different rules. If you are to appear under the aegis of Prentice-Hall and you wish to quote fifty or more words of copyrighted material from a single publication, you must secure written permission from the copyright owner. The same rule applies at the Army's Center of Military History. But if you are to be published by Harper and Row the magic number is five hundred words. Commas and other pieces of punctuation tend to be used or not used according to the house style. The strict (some might say old-fashioned) approach is to use a comma after even the shortest of dependent phrases, if these phrases open a sentence. Other firms disdain this grammatical nicety.

The Center of Military History has a style manual of its own. The one used by most commercial publishers in this country is the latest edition of *A Manual of Style*, published by The University of Chicago Press. If the Government Printing Office is to be your publisher, the latest edition of its *Style Manual* is required. If other publishers are involved, they should be queried as to whether they have a style manual or what their predilections are. If you are fortunate enough to have an understanding editor, he can supply much help.

The first thing a historian who intends to get into print should do is to look at the marketplace. The *Literary Market Place* (LMP) (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, published annually) is an obvious first choice. It can be obtained at virtually any library. Any good librarian of your choice can give you the names and addresses of other reference works that will help in determining possible publishers of your material. If you are near a large library, check the magazines in its current periodicals room. What kind of articles do they use? How long are they? Does a journal publish popular or serious material? Unlike books, articles usually have to be written with a particular publisher in mind. It goes without saying that if you have written *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* (New York: Macmillan, 1972) such help that is advised in these paragraphs is unnecessary. But the Bachs, both the best-selling literary type and the incomparable musician, both Richard and Johann Sebastian, are few and far between. This section is directed at those who do not possess extraordinary gifts.

The bibliography that follows may seem a bit slight. But not because of the canard that blossoming officers can digest only specially prepared portions. This assessment smacks of a slur on the brain cells and the intellectual digestive system of young people who wear a uniform. They can eat and drink of literature as well as their brothers and sisters who study and work in jeans.

Anyone who wants to write should read, in addition to the following, anything he can lay hands and eyes on: good and bad history, good and bad magazines, cookbooks, obesity cures, telephone books (mainly the yellow pages), even ungrammatical advertisements. He should live it up in words. Follett's *Modern American Usage* should be in his regimen as well as Fowler's *Modern English Usage*, which is on the list. The Bible and Shakespeare are omitted from it because they are staples of literary life. Like well-taught English courses, they are prerequisites for writing of readable prose, whether history or not.

It would be remiss for a chapter on research and writing to omit the title of probably the most helpful and therapeutic book on the subject: *The Elements of Style*, by William Strunk, Jr., and E. B. White. It is full of common sense, which is a commodity that writers can always use. The most indispensable tool of all, however, is the ability to read voluminously, to digest what is read, and to translate the acquired knowledge into articulate meaning for others. This is the tool that cuts to the heart of what research and writing are all about.

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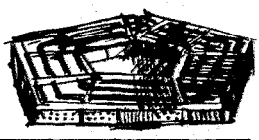
Chapter 21

Military History in the Department of Defense



Romana Danysh

WITHIN the Department of Defense are several historical agencies and programs comparable to those of the United States Army. The Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Air Force, the Navy, and the Marine Corps all have historical offices. In fact, the Department of Defense is the largest employer of professional historians in the federal government. Each of the military services also teaches history in its schools and encourages the study of military history as a professionally rewarding activity, and many military officers have graduate degrees in history.

The Office of the Secretary of Defense

Recognizing the need for maintaining a historical record of the activities of his office and its associated boards and staffs, James Forrestal, the first Secretary of Defense, established the position of Historian, Office of the Secretary of Defense, on 8 March 1949. In December of that year Forrestal's successor, Louis Johnson, issued a directive outlining the major duties of the historian: collecting and preserving historical documents, writing a thorough and objective history of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, preparing the secretary's semiannual report to the president and Congress, and coordinating historical projects within the Department of Defense.

Over the years these functions have varied according to the specific assignments given by each Secretary of Defense, the changing requirements of the times, and the historian's interpretation of his responsibilities. The secretary's report, for example, was published semiannually until June 1958, on a fiscal-year basis from 1959 to 1968, and then discontinued. Recently, there has been much greater emphasis on writing the history of the

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Office of the Secretary of Defense. In addition to several volumes of this general history, a number of special studies are also being prepared for publication, including a two-volume history on prisoners of war in Southeast Asia, a history of military assistance, and a documentary volume on the organization of the Department of Defense from 1947 to the present. Professional historians, hired on a consultant basis, are writing most of these publications, since the small permanent historical staff, consisting of the OSD historian, his deputy, another historian, and a secretary, has many other duties.

Collection of historical documents remains one of the major missions, and interviews with important present and former Department of Defense officials are now being conducted to supplement the written records. The historical staff cooperates closely with the State Department in preparing for publication the documentary series, *Foreign Relations of the United States*. The staff also works on many special projects for the Secretary of Defense and other high officials, ranging from brief replies to simple reference questions to comprehensive historical studies on complex topics.

Although the OSD historian is responsible for coordinating historical activities in the Department of Defense, this coordination is largely informal. Even before his position was created in 1949, the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and Joint Chiefs of Staff already had historical programs of their own, and no attempt has ever been made to unify them into a single defense historical program. Nevertheless, the OSD historian maintains close contact with all historical agencies in the department and serves as the senior historian for the Department of Defense.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Joint Chiefs of Staff created the JCS Historical Section on 2 October 1945, when they agreed to designate an Army officer and a Navy officer, of suitable background and ability, to write the official history of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. By the end of the year there were six officers in the new section. In December 1946 the Joint Chiefs named the heads of the War and Navy Department historical offices as the senior Army member and senior Navy member, adding a senior Air Force member in November 1950. Five volumes of the official JCS history were completed by mid-1954 when the section temporarily suspended work on the history because of an increasing number of higher priority tasks.

On 8 March 1955 the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued a charter for the Historical Section designating it as the agency responsible for all historical matters within their organization. The charter provided that the section would function under the Director of the Joint Staff and would no longer be subordinate to the group of senior service members. Except for a military chief, personnel were to be professional civilian historians. In 1958 the section was transferred to the Joint Secretariat and renamed the Historical Division; on 1 January 1961 it was reorganized to consist of a Histories Branch and a Special Projects Branch. Work on volumes of the official JCS history resumed in 1961 with the understanding that the division would continue to give priority to special projects. Since October 1964, a civilian historian has served as the chief of the Historical Division.

At present the main function of the Histories Branch is to prepare volumes describing the organizational development and major activities of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Special Projects Branch is responsible for producing special studies. It also furnishes staff historical support to other components of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and reviews the annual historical reports required of all unified and specified commands. Although JCS histories are primarily for internal use, copies are distributed to the chiefs of the military services and to the senior service schools. Once declassified, they are placed with the JCS records in the National Archives where they are available to the general public.

The Air Force

The Air Force historical program traces its origin to 1942 when a Historical Division was established in Headquarters, Army Air Forces, as a result of President Roosevelt's request that each government agency prepare an administrative record of its wartime activities. The program continued after the end of World War II and after the establishment of the U.S. Air Force as a separate service. In September 1949 the central historical office moved to the Air University at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, leaving only a small liaison office in Washington, D.C.

During the two decades that the Historical Division remained at the Air University, it completed a seven-volume history, *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, edited by Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate (1948–58), and published a history of the Air Force from 1907 to 1957, two volumes containing brief histories of Air Force combat units of World War II, and a volume on the

Air Force in Korea. The authors and editors of these publications were either division members or former Army Air Forces historians who had returned to academic life after World War II. The division also prepared a long series of monographs called USAF Historical Studies, worked on many special studies, projects, and reports, maintained a growing archival collection, and answered various requests for historical information. At the same time, it supervised a global field program covering current activities, which was the largest part of the Air Force historical program thoughout this period.

A major reorganization and a fundamental change in the objectives of the historical program took place in January 1969. The liaison office was absorbed by the Office of Air Force History, a new special staff agency of Headquarters, U.S. Air Force, headed by a general officer and manned by civilian and military historians, editors, and administrative personnel. This agency assumed responsibility for directing the Air Force historical program. Since 1969, the main goal of the program has been to publish comprehensive and scholarly historical accounts of Air Force activities which serve as guides for planning, training, and operations, preserve the history of the Air Force and its predecessors, and inform the public about the role of air power in peace and war.

Recent publications include a monograph on the battle of Khe San, an annotated bibliography on Air Force history, a chronology of the Army Air Forces in World War II, a four-volume documentary history of the Air Service in World War I, and an illustrated history of the Air Force in Southeast Asia. Several monographs and a series of narrative volumes on the war in Vietnam as well as major studies of air defense and strategic deterrence since World War II are currently in preparation. Within the Office of Air Force History, the Histories Division with its General Histories, Special Histories, and Editorial Branches is responsible for the publication program. The office also has a Support Division consisting of reference services and administration, and there is a special assistant for field history programs.

The former Historical Division at Maxwell Air Force Base, redesignated the Historical Research Division in 1969, is now an organizational element of the Air University, subject to the policy guidance and operational control of the Office of Air Force History. In May 1972 it was renamed the Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center in memory of the man who served as the Air Force's chief historian from 1946 to 1969. The center is the

principal repository for Air Force historical records. It collects and preserves historical materials of archival significance, determines combat credits and unit lineage, answers historical inquiries, prepares special studies and publications, conducts oral history programs, and furnishes other historical and archival services. The major portion of the center's extensive archival collection consists of unit histories and supporting documents that Air Force organizations have submitted periodically since 1942.

Although the publication effort now has top priority, the field work remains a significant part of the overall historical program. Each major command and numbered air force (or comparable organization) is required to maintain a separate historical office staffed by professional historians. Command historians, in the past usually subordinate to public information officers, now report directly to their commanders. They supervise all historical activity in the organization, prepare monographs and special studies, and submit annual histories. Quarterly historical reports are prepared by wing-level units and by independent groups and squadrons not reporting to a wing. The Air Force awards a special plaque to the "Wing Historian of the Year" for the best quarterly history over the preceding fiscal year.

There is also a field program called Project CHECO (Contemporary Historical Examination of Current Operations), which began in June 1962 in Vietnam as a type of after-action reporting in support of the Air Staff. The Office of Air Force History is responsible for establishing future CHECO field offices during wartime or other emergency situations in order to provide timely historical documentation of air operations.

At present, 145 colleges and universities have Air Force ROTC programs. The curriculum consists of a two-year general military course followed by a two-year professional officer course, with the second year of the general course devoted to the history of air power. The core curriculum at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs includes courses in history, one of which is a survey of modern warfare and society. In addition to the required courses, there are numerous history electives, several on military topics. The academy also offers a history major of particular value for cadets contemplating careers in operations, plans, or intelligence. In 1959 the annual Harmon Memorial Lecture in military history was inaugurated in honor of the first superintendent of the academy, Lt. Gen. Hubert R. Harmon. Each year the academy invites a leading military historian to present an original lecture in this distinguished

series. Since 1967 it has also sponsored a series of military history symposia, currently on a biennial basis, designed to encourage interest in military history among the cadets, members of the armed forces, professional historians, and other scholars. The proceedings of the symposia are published jointly by the Air Force Academy and the Office of Air Force History.

None of the schools in the Air University at Maxwell Air Force Base teaches military history as an independent subject or separate study area, but history provides background for various study areas, particularly in the university's senior school, the Air War College.

The Navy

The origins of the Navy's historical program may be traced to President John Adams's directive in 1800 to the first Secretary of the Navy to establish a library, the initiation of a project in 1881 to collect and publish naval records of the Civil War, and the establishment of an Office of Library and Naval War Records in 1884. Between 1894 and 1922 that office and its successor, the Office of Naval Records and Library, published thirty volumes of *Offical Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, with a general index completing the series in 1927.

To collect World War I historical material and record wartime operations, a history section was organized under the Chief of Naval Operations in 1918. The section was later transferred to the Office of Naval Records and Library, which published eight of the monographs written on World War I. After completion of the volumes of Civil War records, it published two other documentary series, one on the quasi war with France (seven volumes, 1935-38) and one on the Barbary wars (six volumes, 1939-44). The head of the office was also designated Curator for the Navy Department in 1930.

With the outbreak of World War II, the Office of Naval Records and Library began to systematically collect documents on the war. Early in 1942, the Navy commissioned Samuel Eliot Morison of Harvard University and assigned him the responsibility of writing a history of naval operations; in February 1943, Robert G. Albion of Princeton was entrusted with supervising the documentation of wartime Navy Department administration. To coordinate the preparation of wartime histories, a flag officer was designated Director of Naval History in 1944. After

the war, his office merged with the Office of Naval Records and Library, which was renamed the Naval History Division in 1952. The main products of the World War II effort were about three hundred unpublished bound volumes of administrative histories, Morison's fifteen-volume *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II* (1947-62), and Rear Admiral Julius A. Furer's *Administration of the Navy Department in World War II* (1959). To provide coverage of the Korean War, James A. Field of Swarthmore College, under contract to the Naval History Division, wrote a one-volume history of naval operations.

The Director of Naval History gained added responsibilities when the Navy Memorial Museum opened in the Washington Navy Yard in 1963. Both the division and the museum are now parts of the Naval Historical Center established on 1 December 1971 at the Navy Yard. The Director of Naval History, a flag officer on the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations, is also Director of the Naval Historical Center, as well as Curator for the Navy Department. The Secretary of the Navy's advisory committee on naval history, composed of civilian scholars, reviews the programs and activities of the center and its members serve as consultants.

The Naval History Division has many functions and duties including research, writing, and publishing in American naval history. It maintains library, archival, and curatorial facilities that provide a wide variety of historical and staff services to the Navy Department, other official users, visiting scholars, and the general public. The Navy Department Library is one branch of the Naval History Division. Another branch, the Operational Archives, collects and services naval records relating primarily to operations, policy, and strategy from 1940 to the present. The division's Ships History Branch keeps files on all ships that have served in the Navy, prepares histories of these ships, and recommends names and sponsors for new ships. The Curator Branch has custody of thousands of artifacts, numerous prints and paintings, and a large collection of historic photographs. A fifth branch, the Historical Research Branch, concentrates on research, writing, and editing of naval documents for publication. Although each branch has certain specific functions, all branches share the division's general reference and staff support work and participate in its publication program.

Before World War II the Navy's historical publications consisted largely of collections of documents, but since the war they have become more diversified. The current Naval History Division catalog lists histories, biographies, chronologies,

bibliographic and archival guides, illustrated paperback pamphlets, and historical prints, as well as documentary series. In the past, interpretive historical narratives were usually written by academic historians like Morison and Field or by professional Navy officers like Furer. Although not members of the Naval History Division, these authors were sponsored by that office, had full access to official records, and received research, editorial, and administrative assistance from the division. Recently, however, division personnel began to work on a major narrative history of the Navy in the Vietnam conflict. Another important publication now in preparation is the *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*. Of the projected eight volumes, six are in print, containing brief histories of all commissioned ships whose names begin with the letters *A* through *S*. A third major current project is the multivolume series entitled *Naval Documents of the American Revolution*, seven volumes of which (covering the period from December 1774 to February 1777) have been published to date.

The Naval Historical Center at the Washington Navy Yard also has administrative responsibility for the Department of the Navy Declassification Team. The team, which is Navy-wide and includes representatives from the Marine Corps, was organized in 1972 as a special agency for systematic review of classified records. Outside the Naval Historical Center are several full-time historians in some of the major commands, bureaus, and offices of the Navy Department, and all ships and commands are required to prepare annual histories.

Although the Navy's school system emphasizes technical and scientific subjects, some history is taught at every educational level. At the Naval Academy in Annapolis all plebes must take a semester of Modern Western Civilization and a semester of American Naval Heritage, and many midshipmen take other history courses as part of their humanities and social sciences requirements or as electives. A history major provides a basic background as well as the opportunity for specialized study in American, European, non-Western, naval, or military history. The academy held its first historical symposium on 8 May 1972, with twentieth-century American naval history as the theme and Samuel Eliot Morison as the guest of honor. Similar meetings were held in 1973 and 1977 and others are scheduled for the future.

Naval ROTC programs are currently conducted on fifty-eight campuses. The curriculum includes a required course on the history of sea power and maritime affairs and an elective in

American military affairs. Students selecting the Marine Corps option take two additional history-oriented courses on the evolution of warfare and amphibious operations. The Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, places major emphasis on advanced degrees in science and engineering, but its Department of National Security Affairs offers several history electives, one of which covers recent insurgency warfare. The Naval War College at Newport, Rhode Island, teaches strategy and policy by means of a series of historical case studies starting with the Peloponnesian War. Among the chairs for visiting professors at the college is the Ernest J. King Chair of Maritime History, established after World War II in honor of the wartime Chief of Naval Operations and Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet. Over the years, this position has been held by outstanding military and naval historians.

The Marine Corps

On 1 December 1971 the Commandant of the Marine Corps named a general officer as Director of Marine Corps History and Museums and put him in charge of the Historical Division with responsibility for the formulation, conduct, and supervision of the Marine Corps historical program. In the past, the historical office had been a section, a branch, and a division, attached from time to time to different parts of Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, while some historical functions had been assigned to other agencies, such as the Division of Information and the Marine Corps Museum.

The first Marine Corps historical office was organized in 1919. It operated largely as a reference service and a records depository until the end of World War II, when a sustained historical writing program was added to its reference and archival functions. Between 1947 and 1955 the office published fifteen monographs describing individual World War II campaigns from the defense of Wake Island to victory on Okinawa. These monographs served as preliminary studies for the official five-volume *History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II* (1958-71). A number of articles written by members of the historical office for the *Marine Corps Gazette* during the Korean War became the basis for another five-volume history, *U.S. Marine Operations in Korea* (1954-72).

On 15 October 1973 the Historical Division was redesignated as the History and Museums Division. It is a special staff

activity of Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, and the director reports directly to the commandant. There are two deputy directors, one for each branch of the division. The Historical Branch supervises the preparation and publication of official Marine Corps histories and the preparation of historical studies in support of planning, some of which may be published for wider distribution. The branch plans and coordinates the writing effort, administers a comprehensive oral history program, serves as the principal research and documentation center for Marine Corps history, and prepares lineage and honors certificates for all Marine Corps units.

The publications of the Historical Branch range from simple pamphlets to multivolume histories. A definitive, thoroughly documented, and extensively illustrated history entitled *Marines in the Revolution*, published in 1975, was the Marine Corps' major contribution to the bicentennial celebration. Currently under preparation are several unit histories, a comprehensive chronology of Marine Corps history from 1775 to 1975, and a variety of narrative studies, including nine monographs on Marine operations in Vietnam. The monographs will be followed by an official multivolume history of the Marine Corps in Vietnam, comparable to the World War II and Korean War series. Authors of such publications are civilian historians, Marine Corps officers, or civilian-military teams that combine professional experience in historical research and writing with extensive military knowledge.

The second branch of the History and Museums Division is the Museums Branch. Its main function is to collect, preserve, and exhibit objects, memorabilia, artwork, and personal papers of lasting historical and traditional value to the Marine Corps. The branch provides technical support to Marine Corps command museums at various posts and stations and operates the Marine Corps Museum in the Washington Navy Yard. That museum is in the Marine Corps Historical Center, which houses the entire Historical Branch and most of the Museums Branch. The ordnance and aviation collections are located at the Marine Corps base in Quantico, Virginia.

Although the primary focus of the Marine Corps historical program is the Marine Corps itself, the program also emphasizes service to the Department of Defense and other government agencies, to the academic community, and to the general public. Most Marine Corps organizations, including all Fleet Marine Force and Marine Corps Reserve units down to the battalion and separate company level, submit annual or semiannual command

chronologies. Marine Corps staff historians in the field prepare historical reports, collect historical documents, and conduct oral history interviews. The field program also includes collection of items of potential historical significance and other museum activities.

In the Education Center of the Marine Corps Development and Education Command at Quantico, Virginia, military history courses are part of the required program at the Basic School, the Communication Officers School, and the Amphibious Warfare School, while the Command and Staff College offers two electives in the field. On 8 April 1972 Quantico hosted the Marine Corps' first conference on military and naval history, which was modeled after the military history symposia of the Air Force Academy. Future conferences may be held at the Marine Corps Historical Center in the Washington Navy Yard.

The Coast Guard

Although the Coast Guard is in the Department of Transportation, it is one of the military services and operates as a part of the Navy in wartime. At present, the Coast Guard has neither a separate historical office nor an official historical program comparable to those of the other services. Its only professional historian is assigned to the Public Affairs Division, where his principal function is to provide a historical reference service for official and public use.

The Coast Guard's most significant historical publications to date have been a series of thirty monographs entitled *The Coast Guard at War*, which came out in limited editions between June 1944 and January 1954. They cover the entire range of Coast Guard participation in World War II, with each monograph devoted to a separate phase of the service's multifaceted wartime activities. The first monograph was prepared by the Statistical Division, while all the rest were written by the Historical Section of the Public Information Division. After the completion of that project, the Coast Guard had no historical staff until 1970, when a historian was appointed.

The historian has published an annotated bibliography listing books, monographs, and pamphlets dealing in whole or in part with the Coast Guard and its predecessors and a detailed, documented chronology of the evolution of the Coast Guard's aids to navigation. Recently the Public Affairs Division also initiated a publication program of historical works prepared by

Coast Guardsmen on their own time, including bibliographies, chronologies, transcripts of interviews, and monographs on various aspects of Coast Guard history. The first product of this program was an unclassified account of the activities of the Coast Guard in Southeast Asia, published in 1975.

At the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut, incoming cadets receive orientation lectures in Coast Guard history, and a semester of American history is part of the core curriculum. In addition, there are several elective history courses. No history major as such is offered, but the academy's government major includes history. Coast Guard history is also taught at the Officer Candidate School in the Coast Guard Reserve Training Center at Yorktown, Virginia.

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